

From  
Floyd  
Witt  
Sep  
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# Joined the Major



John Wesley Witt, pioneer settler, Judge and soldier, laid down the cares of this life last Sunday June 30 at noon at the age of 78 years.

Forty years ago Major Witt was one of the most conspicuous figures in this valley. He was County and Probate Judge, Commander in Chief of the Wasatch militia, and was in reality the head man in all political, municipal and business affairs. The successful settlement and organization of this county is largely due to his individual efforts.

He was a man of strong convictions and one who united sound common sense with candid, outspoken temper. He was eminently fitted to mould the rude elements of pioneer society into form and consistency. His personality aided in raising to a higher standard of citizenship the new and growing population of this mountain valley. How much the people of this valley are indebted to such men as he few men today realize.

His name will go down to posterity as among the greatest of Wasatch County's citizens, as an affectionate husband, a loving father and a good citizen and neighbor.

The funeral was held in the stake house Tuesday and the remains were followed to the Heber City cemetery by a long line of vehicles and preceded by the old veterans of the county.

He was the father of 19 children, 13 boys and 6 girls, 13 of whom are living; he has 42 grand children and 17 great grand children.

## BIOGRAPHICAL.

John Wesley Witt was born in Hamilton county, Illinois, Feb. 10, 1829. He was the son of Robert Witt and Darcus Willis Witt, who became identified with the Mormon church soon after its organization. John Wesley was baptized at Far West when he was eight years old, and two years later he moved with his mother to Quincy, Ill.; his father having died when he was but four years old. His mother married Elisha Averett and in 1840 they moved to Nauvoo.

Wm. Averett of this place is his half brother, being the only son of his mother and Elisha Averett.

Though but a small boy at the time, he labored on the Nauvoo temple and while there became acquainted with most of the leaders of the Mormon church.

He claims the distinction of having seen their bodies after they were killed at Carthage jail.

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He left Nauvoo with the saints at the time of their expulsion in 1846 and for the next four years worked on river steamers along the Mississippi river. In 1850 he came to Utah and on the 27th day of March, 1851, 16 miles north of Salt Lake, he was united in marriage to Lavina Bigelow, who died at their home in Heber Nov. 3, 1900. She was the mother of 13 children, 7 boys and 6 girls.

Soon after his marriage with Miss Bigelow he moved to Provo where he built the first adobe house in that city.

He came to this valley where the remainder of his life has been spent. He was among the very earliest settlers, his being about the third or fourth family to arrive in the valley.

When the county was organized in 1862 he was elected as its first probate judge which position he held for six years. From our history of Wasatch County published in the Christmas Waver we clip the following:

"John W. Witt served as probate Judge of this county from this date until the first day of June, 1868, when he was succeeded by Abram Hatch. During Judge Witt's administration of public affairs, occurred the most important events in the history of this county. It was during this time that the Black Hawk war occurred which many of the inhabitants of this county remember to this day, with a thrill of excitement. It was also during this period that the inhabitants of this county endured hardships and privations only known or realized by pioneer settlers of a new country, many of them living in dug-outs and dirt roof houses and eating bread when they could get it, and going without when they could not."

On the first day of November 1869 he married Martha Taylor. Six sons were born as the issue of this marriage four of whom are now living.

